



COUNCILLOR C WILLIAMS
COUNCILLOR K MACNAUGHTON
COUNCILLOR J BURN

15th March 2019

Dear Gary,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Draft Local Plan. As Chelmsley Wood ward Councillors, we would like to comment on the proposals in Chelmsley Wood and North Solihull specifically.

Question 31 of the consultation document – Infrastructure requirements

We agree with the desire to improve both Kingshurst and Chelmsley Wood village and town centres. Chelmsley Wood town centre in particular has a lot of wasted space above the shops and around the Stephenson Drive area with disused buildings and ugly, disused space used for nothing beyond informal car parking for Solihull Council staff.

We also agree with the need to improve access to public transport. Travel times to Birmingham and to Solihull are very long – often upwards of one hour by bus. It will be quicker to reach London when the HS2 station arrives.

Public space enhancements are very much needed in some places. However, we disagree that this should only be linked to further development. Council policies clearly aim to increase active travel and for physical recreation, including here in the Local Plan. Restricting green space improvements to only when redevelopment is underway is not acceptable. Birmingham City Council has invested in their public spaces to increase active travel and recreation. This has not been linked to development and there has been a noticeable increase of cycling and walking through green spaces.

We do agree though that further regeneration opportunities do not compromise existing open space such as playing pitches, like those at Bluebell Recreation Ground and Newby Grove. When assessing the value of open spaces, we believe that a local survey of use should be undertaken with residents as sites that may not look like they will be popular and well used, often are.

Site 3 – Simon Digby site (site reference 232)

We have concerns at the inclusion and sheer scale of this site. It is proposed on land that has always been a green site and is an important part of the River Cole biodiversity

corridor. Loss of this site in this way would have significant impacts on biodiversity and on recreational use for nearby residents. We are also concerned that a new road accessing the site would have further impacts still. We are disappointed that this site has not been open for consultation as the whole Local Plan should be open for review. Past decisions do need revisiting when the Plan is reviewed so the whole Plan can be considered – not just those selected for this consultation.

Site 5 – Chester Road/ Moorend Avenue

We are comfortable with the removal of this site from the Plan

Site 7 – Kingshurst Village Centre

We agree that redevelopment is needed here that could lead to more housing overall. However, this needs to be done sensitively and with respect to residents on Church Close in particular.

Site 15 – Jensen House, Auckland Drive

While not in Chelmsley Wood, we are concerned that development here could lead to loss of the site that is needed for a new school, or loss of playing areas in an area with a shortage of green space.

Sites in the Site Assessment Document (principally ‘red’ sites)

Site reference 53 – We agree that Bluebell Recreation Ground is unsuitable for development. It’s a popular local park and other land is already being lost to HS2 nearby.

Site reference 221 – We agree that the Onward Club green space is unsuitable for development, as it’s a recreational area used for sports.

Site reference 225 – We agree that Chelmsley Wood Town Centre needs redevelopment to better use space.

Site reference 232 – Comments above regarding site 3 of the existing Local Plan.

Site reference 52 – Comments above regarding site 5 of the existing Local Plan.

Site reference 54 – We strongly agree that the green space here is well used recreational space of significant value. It was donated philanthropically to the predecessor local authority to be used for recreational activity. **However, we are concerned that there could be some development at the bottom part of the site,** behind the Family Tree Club on Clopton Crescent. A Council depot was placed on this land in the past despite there being a Covenant on all of the playing field. Returning this land to green space would return the land to its original use.

Site reference 56 – We agree this site is unviable and not sensible to develop. Most of it is already well developed with popular, socially-rented bungalows and a Public House that has received recent investment.

We hope that these comments will be taken into account in the further development of the Plan.

Yours sincerely,

Karl Macnaughton, James Burn and Chris Williams

Chelmsley Wood ward Councillors